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ABSTRACT

Because a cumulative score is not computed for the Urban Teacher Selection Interview, item rankings do not appear to be operationally related to the overall ranking and final categorization of teacher education candidates. The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which, during the final selection process, the interviewers ranked and categorized candidates on the basis of information collected during the interview. Subjects were 33 candidates for an alternative teacher-licensure program. Candidates were scored by trained interviewer pairs, using 14 items in 7 areas of the Urban Teacher Selection Interview Continua Rating Form. Multiple regression was used to determine which items best predicted the final rankings. Only one item, Application of Generalizations-A surfaced as a significant predictor of final ranking. Eight of the 14 items correlated significantly with the final ranking. Of the six that did not correlate to final ranking, five were highly correlated with other items in the interview. These findings indicate that the Urban Teacher Selection Interview does seem to have reasonable internal validity. Two tables present study findings. (Contains 22 references.) (Author/SLD)

ABSTRACT

"THE URBAN TEACHER SELECTION INTERVIEW: INTERNAL VALIDITY"

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Since a cumulative score is not computed for the Urban Teacher Selection Interview, item ratings do not appear to be operationally related to the overall ranking and final categorization of teacher education candidates. The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which, during the final decision making process, the interviewers ranked and categorized candidates on the basis of the information collected during the interview. Subjects were 33 candidates for an alternative licensure program and had been recommended for the program by administrators from four local school districts. Trained interviewers worked in pairs to conduct the interviews. Candidates were scored, using the Urban Teacher Selection Interview Continua Rating Form, on 14 items in seven areas: Persistence, Response to Authority, Application of Generalizations, Approach to At-Risk Students, Personal vs. Professional Orientation, Burnout, and Failibility.

Multiple regression was used to determine which items best predicted the final rankings. Only one item, Application of Generalizations-A, surfaced as a significant predictor of final ranking ($p < .019$). Pearson product-moment correlations were computed to determine the degree to which each dependent variable correlated with final ranking. Eight of 14 items on the interview correlated significantly with the final ranking. However, of the six items which did not correlate to final ranking, five were highly correlated with other items within the interview.

Based on these findings, the Urban Teacher Selection Interview does seem to have a reasonable degree of internal validity.

Much of the criticism leveled at education over the last decade has centered on teachers and teacher education. Parents, businesspeople, legislators, and even school administrators have voiced concerns that teachers are not prepared for today's classrooms. Many in the business of preparing teachers for the profession, however, feel that if we are to overcome these criticisms we must choose more prudently potential teachers (Smith & Coleman, 1991). To these educators, careful selection of candidates for teacher education programs may be more important than the actual training. Martin Haberman put it this way, "It is easer and wiser to select people with attributes that will enable them to succeed in metropolitan schools than it is to expect that individuals who might be sexist, racist, uncreative, uninterested in the world of ideas, rigid, moralistic, humorless, or fearful will be transformed by virtue of completing a traditional teacher education program" (1991, p.1). Mickler and Soloman (1986, p. 340) agree: "Overall the research suggests that teachers' technical skills and knowledge of content are relatively ineffective in facilitating total student growth in the absence of supportive and positive relationships between the teacher and the student." They conclude that teacher selection procedures which do not use attitudes, behaviors, and life style as pre-employment measures are unfair to students and unwise for school officials.

Applegate (1987, p.2) notes that many of the cries for reform in education focus on teacher candidates, but she also writes "...historically only minimal attention has been given to the selection of those most able to teach." Kasambria (1984) found both grades and recommendations have been inflated to the point that they are virtually useless as tools for helping to make appropriate decisions about teacher candidates. Choices must be based on other factors.

Dissatisfaction with traditional selection variables has shifted teacher educators to the

qualities that appear to distinguish effective teachers and to attempts to discover the degree to which those qualities are possessed by candidates. Jane Stallings (1992), writing about teachers in inner-city schools, lists nine personal characteristics, three basic knowledge skills, and six lengthy pedagogical knowledge and skills objectives considered to be attributes of effective teachers. These range from "sense of personal efficacy" to "observational and interpretive skills needed to reflect on instruction."

Several interviews have been devised by personnel departments, universities, and consultants to assist school districts in selecting teachers who have the greatest potential for success in the classroom--people who have the attributes listed by Stallings (1992) and by others. Of the structured interviews available to school district personnel, the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory is perhaps the most notable. Others include the Omaha Teacher Interview, Teacher Perceiver Interview (developed by Selection Research Incorporated of Lincoln, Nebraska), and many interview instruments developed specifically for particular districts. Formal, structured interviews are generally believed to provide the best assessment because they can be more readily validated through research (Baker & Morris, 1990).

All of these measures attempt to define certain qualities which teachers should possess and then to construct questions to determine if the applicant has those qualities. The reaction to the overall effectiveness of these measures is mixed (Miller, 1977; Wong, 1989). Educators continue to be thwarted in their efforts to discern such skills in applicants to both teaching preparation programs and to teaching assignments. All of the characteristics listed by Stallings (1992), for example, have definite "face" appeal--they look right. According to the American Psychological Association Standards (1974, p. vii), though, "'face' validity, the mere appearance of validity, is not an acceptable basis for interpretive inferences from test scores." How, then,

does one determine whether an applicant possesses the required qualities and whether the administrator is asking questions that will discriminate between successful and unsuccessful teachers? Stone (1978) says, "The success of virtually all personnel selection techniques (e.e., testing, interviewing, etc.) rests upon their criterion-related validity." The question of validity remains unanswered for most interview processes currently used to predict the success of teachers. Tuckman (1972) notes that questionnaire items are usually reviewed for clarity and distribution of responses without necessarily running an item analysis. In order to know whether or not such interviews are able to identify characteristics of successful teachers, both internal and external validity must be addressed.

The relationship between the characteristics measured in the interview and actual selection made as a result of the interview can help determine internal validity of the decisions. Tuckman (1972) feels the researcher must constantly ask about your items: Is this what I want to be measuring? (p. 192). He concludes the larger the correlation between an item score and the total score, the greater the relationship between what the item is measuring and what the total scale is measuring. (p. 199) When validation studies were done on the Teacher Perceiver Interview (Sailor, 1984) and the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory (Wong, 1989), for example, statistical analysis showed that total scores on shorter versions correlated highly with total scores on the original forms. In each case some items on the original interview contributed more strongly to total score than did others. Clearly, appropriate statistical validation of teacher selection instruments can save time in the selection procedure and, more importantly, assure educators that they are measuring the criteria they have identified.

The Urban Teacher Selection Interview

The Urban Teacher Selection Interview has been developed by Martin Haberman over a period of 32 years and reflects four decades of change in urban schools in the United States. As early as 1958 Haberman began reviewing and researching personality tests as predictors of effective teachers. The work of Robert K. Merton in the 1960's presented a sociological analysis of professions which Haberman has applied to the task of predicting teacher success. Merton identified two extremes--on the left were personality traits which individuals could be expected to demonstrate regardless of the situation, and on the right were the behaviors which would be effective for all teachers in a specific situation. Merton advocated that each profession develop "mid-range functions" somewhere between these two extremes--that is, groups of behaviors that particular practitioners must demonstrate in order to be effective. Originally, Haberman identified eight mid-range functions for teachers. Over a period of years these mid-range functions were reevaluated and refined into the seven mid-range functions which currently appear on the interview. When the interview was used in the Milwaukee Public Schools, an error rate of approximately 1 percent was reported between interview prediction and actual performance of teachers (Haberman, 1991).

The "Mid-Range Functions" identified by Haberman are: Persistence, Response to Authority, Application of Generalizations, Approach to At-Risk Students, Personal vs. Professional Orientation Toward Teaching, Burnout, and Fallibility. Persistence is identified in interviews by two questions that look for tenacity, commitment, and a perception of the teacher's daily job. It attempts to identify people who will continually seek solutions to the never-ending problems of a classroom. Respondents are asked to imagine a problem they

might encounter as a beginning teacher, to suggest several ways to deal with that particular problem, and to estimate how often they might have to think about a problem like this.

The second Mid-Range Function, Response to Authority, seeks to determine the respondent's willingness to support student learning "in the face of or even against school policy." Candidates are asked to identify an activity they would undertake in spite of the fact that their administrators might not support the activity. Scoring is based on how they respond to an irrational, dogmatic authority who might say, for example, "I don't care if the children are learning, stop this activity in your classroom".

Application of Generalizations determines the degree to which the respondent is able to deal with universal statements about human behavior. When a broad principle has been identified by candidates, they are asked to describe how beliefs in this principle might be demonstrated in their own classrooms. Can the candidate apply principles to practice?

Approach to At-Risk Students seeks to discover if the candidate understands that it is her/his professional responsibility as a teacher to constantly find effective curricula and methods of instruction regardless of the problems faced by at-risk children. Candidates who blame a child's failure on the child, the parents, or the situation, (e.g. the socio-economic background) have not responded appropriately.

The fifth function, Personal versus Professional Orientation to Teaching, intends to give the interviewer insight into the candidate's expectations of pupils and their need for support from their students. Teachers who enter the profession because they "just love children" are seeking to fulfill their own emotional needs and will be disappointed, while those with more professional expectations regarding teaching will be less likely to experience

this same type of dissatisfaction.

Burnout is the term used by Haberman to represent the enormous physical and emotional drain teachers encounter. Respondents are asked to explain some causes of low teacher morale and then to suggest how they might find ways to deal with burnout.

The last function, Fallibility, looks for the candidates' ability to accept himself/herself, and to accept others. Respondents are to think of a mistake they might make as a teacher and to propose ways they would deal with these mistakes.

Haberman's interview differs from most other interviews in two ways. First, if a candidate receives a 0 rating on any function, he/she is considered to have failed the interview. Secondly, candidates do not receive an overall, cumulative score. Rather, at the end of the first three interviews, those conducting the interview are asked to discuss and agree upon a ranking of the candidates and an assignment of each candidate to a category (Star, High, Average, or Failure). Additional candidates who are interviewed are also assigned a category and are fitted into the total rank order begun by the first three. Haberman further asks interviewers to make separate decisions on every item--including the overall rating.

The Urban Teacher Selection Interview was adopted as a primary selection tool in a new alternative licensure program at Memphis State University. Memphis, and the surrounding area, offer unique opportunities for training teachers. The city itself faces many of the urban and inner-city problems that other metropolitan areas must confront, and often new teachers do not feel prepared to deal with the daily crises which occur. The program incorporates strict selection procedures (of the initial 1,500+ applicants, only 16 were

selected); intensive course preparation which includes 8 hours a day, 5 days a week during the first summer and two courses during each of the following two semesters; and a year of teaching in a regular classroom with constant mentoring by both university personnel and an experienced teacher in the building where they work. Given the enormous commitment of time and energy for the program and the challenges of urban teaching, heavy emphasis was placed on selecting students who would ultimately be successful. After deliberation, the Urban Teacher Selection Interview was chosen as the final discriminating measure for candidates who had met the other criteria imposed by the university and the state.

Based on the extensive uses of the Haberman method (Haberman, 1991), the questions and the process appear to provide candidates ample opportunity to demonstrate their qualifications and potential to teach effectively. Since a cumulative score is not computed, item ratings are not operationally related to the overall ranking and categorization, with the exception of the standard that a 0 score on any item constitutes failure of the interview. A natural question of interest, and the one examined here, is to what extent is the overall rating a function of the individual items? Ideal expectations were that each of the 14 items would contribute fairly equally to the candidates final ranking, and each item would make a unique (additive) contribution to the final ranking.

Method

Subjects were 33 candidates for the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Scholars at Memphis State University. These candidates were selected by administrators from four local city or county school districts. At the time of the study candidates were all working as

substitute teachers in these districts. Each had an undergraduate degree with at least a 2.5 grade point average in the last 60 hours, had taken the Miller's Analogies Test with a minimum score of 40 and had submitted two letters of recommendation from principals in their respective districts. In the principal's recommendation, principals were asked to rank each candidate on a scale of "Very successful (1), Successful (2), Average (3), Marginal (4), and I Have Serious Concerns (5)". Immediately before the interview, candidates were also asked to spend about 30 minutes writing on an assigned topic under the supervision of a faculty member. These writings were scored as Good (1), Average (2), Fair (3), and Poor (4). Of the 33 candidates, 16 were chosen for the Scholars program based on their performance on the Haberman Teacher Selection Interview.

Interviewers worked in pairs to conduct the interview, but score separately. As previously described, at the end of three interviews, the two interviewers discussed the three candidates and agreed on a ranking of them. Each additional set of three interviews required the interviewers to add the 3 new candidates to the order of those they had already ranked. That is, the first three candidates were ranked 1, 2, 3. The next three candidates were ranked among those first three such that the best candidate of the six was ranked first, the second best second, and so on.

On the intervies the seven Mid-Range Functions are divided into two questions each for a total of 14 areas in which the teacher candidate was rated. Each item was scored on a continuum of 0-3. For example, item I.A. could have been scored like this:

0_ _ _X_ _ 1 _ _ _ _ _ _ _2 _ _ _ _ _ _ _3

The candidate would have received one half a point on that item. Candidates could score

anywhere along the continuum (.1, 2.3, 1.75, etc.) Each subpart (question) was considered to be equally as important as the others.

Procedure

The interviews were conducted in the spring of 1993 by faculty and graduate assistants from Memphis State University who had been trained in the Haberman Interview process. Interviewers attended a rigorous eight hour training workshop conducted by Dr. Gabriel Barrow and Delia Stafford, who have conducted more that 1,400 Urban Teacher Selection Interviews themselves, and are the official training team for the Interview. Each Mid-Range Function was discussed in detail and interviewers were given the opportunity for guided practice on each item. In addition, Dr. Haberman visited the campus and discussed the development of the Interview with faculty and school district personnel who would be involved. The Urban Teacher Selection Interview Continua Rating Form and ranking procedure were used to score candidates. A template was used to divide each interval on the rating scale into three equal parts scored as .25, .50, .75...2.75, 3.00. Each candidate was interviewed by two interviewers jointly. At the completion of the first three interviews and subsequent interviews, interviewers discussed and devised rankings according to the procedures described in the previous section. Consequently, interviewers produced a final ranking of all candidates with their best candidate ranked one, second best ranked two, etc. Eight pairs of trained interviewers conducted the interviews during one evening. Each pair was assigned four or five candidates, thus producing final rankings ranging from 1 to 4 or 1

to 5. However, following the Haberman procedure, if a candidate received a "0" on any item he/she was automatically given a final rank of 5.

Results

As discussed earlier, each score mark on the Interview Rating Form was given a numerical value (for example .5, or 2.25). Step-wise multiple linear regression was used to determine which items best predicted the final rankings (possible range=1 to 5). When the rankings were entered as the dependent variables in the regression analysis, and all 14 of the interview items, GPA, MAT scores, principals' recommendations scores, and writing sample scores were employed as independent variables (SPSS Base System, 1992), only one item (Application of Generalizations-A) emerged as a significant predictor of ranking, $R=.46$, $p=.019$. That is, the higher the score on this item, the better the final ranking.

Of the four variables which were not part of the interview, principals' recommendation had the highest correlation with ranking ($R=.462$) while writing sample correlated at a less significant level ($R=.297$), and undergraduate grade point average and MAT scores did not correlate significantly with ranking.

Given the expectancy that many of the interview variables would be intercorrelated and thus share common variance in predicting ranking, simple correlations were examined to determine the degree to which each dependent variable correlated with final ranking. Table 1 summarized the intercorrelations between the Urban Teacher Selection Interview items; Table 2 summarizes the Pearson product-moment correlations between the individual predictor variables and final ranking.

Insert Tables 1 and 2 about here

As shown in Table 1, only two sets of items had high intercorrelations: Persistence-B with Response to Authority-A (.717) and Persistence-A with Persistence-B (.665). Moderately high correlations were found between Personal vs. Professional Orientation-A and Personal vs. Professional Orientation-B (.631), Approach to At-Risk Students-A and Approach to At-Risk Students-B (.628), Burnout-B and Fallibility-B (.619), and Persistence-A and Response to Authority-A (.606). Nineteen other sets of items were moderately correlated, ranging from .370 to .585. Generally, the "A" questions correlated more highly with "B" questions (17 pairs) than with different questions. Specifically, for all seven of the Mid-Range Functions the "A" question correlated with its counterpart "B" question at a moderate to moderately high level (range=.370 to .665). Eight of the pairs had negative correlations, though none of these was significant. The lowest *r* among the items was .006 for Application of Generalizations-A with Personal vs. Professional Orientation-A.

Eight of the fourteen items correlated moderately and significantly with final ranking (see Table 2). The highest correlation was between ranking and Application of Generalizations-A (r=496). The others, in order of the strength of their correlations, were Approach to At-Risk Students-B (r=.439), Approach to At-Risk Students-A (r=.425), Burnout-B (r=.417), Response to Authority-B (r=.376), Burnout-A (r=.358), Persistence-B (r=.357), and Fallibility-B (r=.306). Generally the questions on section "B" of each Mid-

Range Function correlated higher with final ranking than did the "A" questions. The lowest correlation of any of the items with final ranking was Personal vs. Professional Orientation-A ($r = .045$).

Conclusions and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the consistency and predictability of items composing the Urban Teacher Selection Interview. In regressing final ranking on the 14 interview items and other variables, only one variable, Application of Generalizations, was selected for entry into the regression equation ($r = .496$). This item asks candidates to state some principle they believe is true about education. However, other variables, such as Principal's Recommendations ($r = .462$), Burnout-B ($r = .306$), and Approach to At-Risk Students-A ($r = .425$), were almost as strong in predicting final ranking, but did not account for sufficient unique variance to be entered.

Application to Generalizations-A thus emerged as the most discriminating of the individual items. When asked the associated interview question, candidates often responded with "I believe all children can learn" or "I believe learning can be fun and relevant to daily lives." These responses, as well as the responses to other strong predictors such as Burnout, may have been a function of the amount of time a candidate had been in a classroom/teaching situation. That is, it would probably be difficult for younger or less experienced applicants to a teacher education program to generalize about education in a convincing and reasonable way. The influences of the candidate's response on the final decision might also be a function of the philosophies of the interviewers--if the candidate selects a generalization about

education with which the interviewer agrees, the interviewer would value that candidate more highly.

The correlational results indicated that 8 of the 14 items on the interview correlated significantly with the final ranking, although the final ranking on the interview is not derived directly from the item scores. Perhaps more interesting, however, is the significant and relatively high correlation between final ranking and principals' recommendations. Both the rankings and the principal's recommendations were conducted independently and interviewers were not aware of the candidates' scores on either. While the principals' recommendation-rankings correlations is not overly strong, it still suggests that principals, university faculty, and trained interviewers tended to perceive the candidates in a similar manner. Seemingly, they all look for the same qualities or they have all be trained in various educational institutions to distinguish certain qualities that will be acceptable to the education system. It should also be noted that the traditional methods of selecting teacher education candidates for graduate studies, undergraduate GPA ($r = .255$), MAT scores ($r = .064$), and writing sample ($r = .297$) correlated very weakly with ranking. Educators apparently look for characteristics other than academic performance when selecting potential teachers.

The findings indicated that six of the items on the Urban Teacher Selection Interview did not correlate with final ranking (see Table 2). Five of those six, though, were highly correlated with other items within the interview (see Table 1). The final ratings, then, seem to be based on a holistic judgment of the interviewer that is only weakly related to the item responses. Also, that some of the items correlated highly with one another, raises the question of whether such a long interview is really needed? The "A" questions, for example,

tended to overlap highly with their counterpart "B" questions. Both questions, therefore, may not be needed to make a final judgment.

It should be noted that the present study used a small sample. Follow-up research with a larger *n* would certainly be required before any of the items were eliminated from the interview. Other questions which could be addressed in subsequent research are: How do the rankings on this instrument relate to correlations based on industrial interview procedures and to job performance measures (Sailor, 1984)? Does the Haberman interview correlate with other measures of personality characteristics (Mickler and Solomon, 1986)? Are expected responses on the Haberman instrument beyond the experience of those who have not yet been in the classroom (Leeds, 1969)? Most importantly, how well does performance on this interview predict success in teaching? The latter question will be the focus of subsequent research conducted as the present sample and later cohorts complete the alternative licensure program and adopt teaching positions in the schools.

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Table 2

Pearson Correlations Between Predictor Variables and Final Ranking

Dependent Variable	Correlation with Ranking	p
Persistence-A	.240	.089
Persistence-B	.357	.021
Response to Authority-A	.145	.210
Response to Authority-B	.376	.015
Application of Generalizations-A	.496	.002
Application of Generalizations-B	.237	.092
Approach to At-Risk Students-A	.425	.007
Approach to At-Risk Students-B	.439	.005
Personal vs. Professional Orientation-A	.045	.403
Personal vs. Professional Orientation-B	.066	.359
Burnout-A	.358	.020
Burnout-B	.417	.008
Fallibility-A	.236	.093
Fallibility-B	.306	.042
GPA	.255	.100
MAT Scores	.064	.364
Principals' Recommendations	.462	.008
Writing Sample	.297	.047

Table 1

Intercorrelates Between Items on the Urban Teacher Selection Interview, GPA, MAT, and Other Candidate Selection Criteria

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1 Persistence A																		
2 Persistence B	.665**																	
3 Response to Authority A	.606**	.717**																
4 Response to Authority B	.282	.177	.417*															
5 Application of Generalizations A	.280	.217	.253	.281														
6 Application of Generalizations B	.168	.026	.034	.106	.521**													
7 Approach to At-Risk Students A	-.115	.027	-.164	-.128	.552**	.455**												
8 Approach to At-Risk Students B	.356*	.293	.283	.282	.550**	.521**	.628**											
9 Personal vs Professional Orientation A	.307	.166	.091	.154	.006	-.022	-.048	.024										
10 Personal vs Professional Orientation B	.370*	.166	.206	.264	.012	.220	-.347*	-.077	.631**									
11 Burnout A	.116	.139	.217	.407*	.417*	.177	.142	.232	.239	.328								
12 Burnout B	.229	.114	.135	.299	.344	.324	.389*	.370*	.309	.207	.370*							
13 Fallibility A	.375*	.327	.107	.294	.066	.422*	.040	.282	.231	.417*	-.032	.356						
14 Fallibility B	.368*	.371*	.242	.064	.310	.326	.451**	.453**	.377*	.273	.097	.619**	.585*					
15 Final Ranking	.240	.357*	.145	.376*	.496**	.237	.425*	.439*	.045	.066	.358*	.417**	.236	.306				
16 Undergraduate Grade Point	.288	.017	-.072	-.105	.154	.454*	.030	.214	.205	.115	-.085	.102	.205	.024	-.255			
17 Miller's Analogy Test	-.226	-.364*	-.463**	.276	-.133	.183	.256	.127	-.199	-.164	-.032	.052	-.071	-.121	-.064	-.040		
18 Principal's Rating	-.003	.055	-.086	-.053	.297	.381*	.294	.121	-.123	.140	.254	.414*	.098	.249	.462*	-.163	.195	
19 Writing Sample Rating	-.023	-.068	-.119	.146	.442**	.589**	.488**	.496**	-.121	-.114	.237	.263	.193	.151	.297	.043	.540**	.280

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*p<.05 **p<.01

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